

MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 28, 2003

SUBJECT: Environmental Justice News for the Week Ending November 28, 2003

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This summarizes environmental justice news for November 28, 2003, through the week ending November 28, 2003. Except as noted, this review is confined to Lexis/Nexis queries conducted under the following search: “(environment! w/2 (justice or racism or equity or disproportionate or disparate)) or (environment! w/50 minority or low-income) or (executive order 12898) or (civil right! w/50 environmental)”. Please note that we have not included multiple articles covering the same topic or articles pertaining to international or foreign-based environmental justice issues, unless they have a direct connection to the United States.

For the week ending November 28, 2003, the following news is current:

A. News-

1. Preston Sparks, “Welfare Obstacles/Transit/ Routes/ May Be/ Added,” The Augusta Chronicle, Augusta, Georgia (November 22, 2003).

The article states that “Augusta’s Planning Commission will work closely with neighborhoods that are made up of mostly low-income, elderly and minority residents.” This new direction was started through an executive order by former President Clinton about four years ago and gives the disadvantaged a better chance to voice their opinions on a projects implementation. Paul Decamp, the planning director for the Augusta-Richmond County Planning Commission said, “What environmental justice boils down to is good public involvement and getting stakeholder involvement in the front end,” the article states.

2. Sandra Barbier, "Landfill's request sparks complaints; Oakville residents oppose state permits," Times-Picayune, New Orleans, Louisiana (November 22, 2003).

Residents of Oakville and their Belle Chasse area neighbors opposed the granting of a new state solid waste permit to a Plaquemines Parish landfill, based on the facilities history of violations. "It is the latest skirmish in a battle that has lasted more than 10 years between residents of the historic, majority-black community and Industrial Pipe Inc. Landfill," according to the article. Megan Hey, a student lawyer with the Tulane Environmental Law Clinic, said "the landfill has operated illegally since 1998, when a three-year, temporary permit expired." The article quotes Hey as stating, "the permit request does not meet state requirements, including a requirement to provide insurance to cover environmental damage and lawsuits."

3. Rhoda Amon, "Can cohesive commerce and housing restore a focal spirit to New Cassel and Wyandanch," Newsday, (November 21, 2003).

Community activist and leaders see a new vision for their communities in New Cassel and Wyandanch, New York, the article reports. "Instead of blight people can see change," says retiring North Hempstead Town Supervisor May Newburger. The revitalization effort is being supported by Sustainable Long Island, a five-year-old organization that works with communities and municipalities to help them develop self-sustaining communities. The visioning process will focus on brownfields redevelopment and will take advantage of new brownfields legislation that was signed into law by Governor George Pataki in October. The bill creates a new cleanup fund and provides incentives for developers and lenders to invest in communities. According to the article, "Mildred Little who founded the New Cassel Environmental Justice Project in 1996 offers the state measured praise, she said, 'They finally discovered we are worth something.'"

4. Dave Battagello, "Incinerator plan rapped; Riverfront facility would burn Detroit's sewage sludge; fallout feared" Windsor Star, Windsor, Ontario (November 27, 2003).

Environmental groups on both sides of the border in the United States and in Canada have raised concerns on a plan to build a riverfront incinerator in Detroit that burns human waste and how the prevailing winds may affect Windsor. "The original plan from Synagro Technologies was to turn Detroit's sludge into a glass aggregate product but the company has reversed that decision and now plans to seek approval to burn 40 percent of the city's biosolid waste and turn the rest into fertilizer," according to the article. Billie Hickey, community activist for Southwest Detroit Environmental Vision, said, "We are holding judgment because we don't know yet what the impact will be. We are waiting to meet with the Michigan Environmental Justice Coalition next week. We are going to brainstorm on ways to deal with this," the article reports.